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STUDIES IN THE LIVES  
OF THE SAINTS



# STUDIES IN THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS



By  
EDWARD HUTTON  
Author of "Frederic Uvedale"

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TO MY MOTHER,

Who gave me life,

Who held my hands when I was a child

And afraid,

Whose love will follow me for ever.



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## INTRODUCTION

*Terrible as an army with banners*

## Introduction

TO regard mysticism as but the secret action of the mind on itself has ever been the tendency of the scientific inquirer. If such attempts have any real value, it is in the evidence they bring forward of our profound ignorance of the most simple phenomena of the interior and unseen life—that child sleeping so peacefully in most of us, only occasionally stirring in the dreams that we learn in time to disregard. And unlike the aesthetic critic it is impossible for us to ignore the reality of these experiences of the Saints. For they have no intrinsic beauty, being really but a kind of profound logic following on that postulate “Let it be granted that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” In the experiences of St. Teresa or St. John of the Cross there is nothing that is of any possible value if the actual experiences told so coldly never really happened. And indeed, when we inquire more closely into the science

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of mysticism, we find scarcely beauty at all, only a kind of tragedy whose end we cannot see—a tragedy that is really after all only a comedy, so that it should end happily. And mysticism, regarded rightly not as the hysterical profession of those who in contemplating some bleeding Christ have lost that temperance and sanity which it is the profound business of criticism to preserve, but regarded as the hard and crystallized logic of some mighty argument, is really not a beautiful thing at all, in that almost its first requirement is a denial of life, a dislike and contempt for the beauty of the world. Entirely without humour, it has at least to this extent influenced every school of Christian thought in that Christianity generally denies humour to God.

Those strong and marvellous beings who look at us so scornfully, so contemptuously, not only from the Middle Age but from the Renaissance itself, have been touched as it were by some great enthusiasm, so that they have convinced the whole world that the immortal gods are in desperate earnest about humanity; that the issue of some tremendous engagement between God and His enemies depends upon the allegiance of mankind. And it is thus through all their terrible ailments and diseases, their frightful troubles and temp-



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tations, that they explain the business of the universe not only to themselves but to us also whom they have taught to wait for death almost as for a bride, that in reality we would give all we possess never to be obliged to meet.

So they have trained the soul till it has become the enemy of the body, and we are a house divided against itself. All the labour of the Greeks cannot withstand their proclamation of eternal war; and so that union between the body and the soul which the ancients were so anxious to maintain is destroyed and the soul is at enmity with the body that in the end it utterly destroys. Nor were they careless merely, nor, confused by so great a cloud of witnesses, only neglectful of that which they had already forgotten. Deliberately they torture that frail and exquisite beauty, and seeing that already the dead so far outnumber the living, become enamoured of a little grave in which to hide a body that hinders them so sweetly in their flight towards immortality.

And St. John of the Cross is especially valuable to us in that he heard with so little emotion that implacable voice calling him up that ivory tower that gets darker and darker as he ascends until, without smiling or weep-

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ing or any love or fear at all, he steps into the profound midnight of that divine shadow, where are neither moon nor stars, but silence only, and a great height. How often has he cried on the cold staircase, wearied out of his indifference almost in despair: O sweet, O pious, O valiant voice, call to me again. Can it be that really in the end he too exclaimed like the Lacedemonian in Plutarch to the dead Nightingale, having found little sap or substance for his nourishment in her musical body, *Vox et praeterea nihil*? Ah, he was well named John of the Cross, for he loved suffering better than anything beside. "Whatsoever is found pleasant to soul or body, abandon that; whatsoever is painful, embrace it." It is his advice to his monks, the which he did not fail to follow himself, seeing, in the words of one who differed from him by a whole world, that "there is nothing strictly immortal but immortality."

But it seems never to have occurred to him that his endeavour to make the world believe him viler than he is, was indeed to be viler than he thought himself to be. For while some have studied to deceive the world as to their sins, he magnifies his petty failures till they who hear him see the wide fields of irreparable defeats smouldering in his soul, in

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which he, who in reality had but seen the scouting legions of Satan on the furthest hills, has after fighting a desperate battle been vanquished for ever. How profoundly he desires men to think untruly ! And so at last, covered with innumerable petty self-deceptions, that shine on him like the silver scales upon a leper, he bears his soul, stripped and almost lifeless, having lost in imaginary encounters not the least precious part of her loveliness and strength, into the divine shadow, and annihilation in God.

But it is different with St. Teresa, whose visions are softer and more sensuous than any seen by St. John. "Being one day in prayer," she says, "our Lord was pleased to show me His sacred hands of excessive beauty ; afterwards His divine face ; and finally, at Mass, all His sacred humanity." And in the very sweetness of that vision she retains something of her humanity, something almost of her womanhood, that the world has forgotten, thinking of her as a man.

She is in reality a Quietist ; her soul is as still as an untroubled pool unmoved by the reflections of the clouds that pass so slowly across a heaven where there is no wind. Not only has she lusted for oblivion, but she has desired no image even of forgetfulness for her

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soul, that in reality she has tired out. She will not lift her head to look on the Son of God, and her eyelids have fallen over her eyes, nor is there any vision in her soul ; she is so passive that even contemplation will come to be almost an intolerable burden. But when borne on swift wings the white Dove of God stirs in the air that has almost bowed her down, she is filled with a new and splendid energy. She is in truth no longer a mere woman saint, but a very angel burning with a pure flame, shining in the light of an invisible sun. And it is with this new strength that she accomplishes her great purpose, and becomes the great practical General of her order.

So we come to see that mysticism in its aim or purpose really is an attempt to do without system or rule ; to regard anything material as an enemy to the immaterial, anything visible as an enemy to the invisible. And it is perhaps for this reason that Molinos is excommunicated while St. Teresa is canonized. For while seeing that the inevitable tendency of visions is to make the human director less indispensable, she understands the danger of any such proposition at least for the general mass of men, and insists with an ever increasing directness on the necessity for obedience, even without question, to the confessor or director

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of the soul. So it is that in her later visions the interior voice gives way before the voice of the Church, or counsels obedience, and accomplishes its purpose in the end only by a conversion of the director himself.

But after all, what is it that in these profound and mysterious beings makes such an appeal to us, overwhelmed as we are by the scepticism that science has taught us. It is their delightful humanity rather than their knowledge of heights to which it is most certain we shall never reach, or their profound thoughts about Christ whom after all we know but so slightly. St. Francis singing over the Umbrian Hills, St. Lidwid flying over the ice with her playfellows through the thin cold air of Holland, the longing for an overwhelming love in the heart of Blessed Angela of Foligno, so that she hears Christ say, "I love thee more than any woman in the valley of Spoleto," it is these things that remain with us when the rules and victories of St. Teresa or the visions of St. John of the Cross are forgotten, or remembered only as some discord in an exquisite piece of music. Is then the way to Heaven so sharp? Ah, he who is so anxious for death, and makes his war on the body with so little relenting, has perhaps won to quite another heaven than that in which the

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Prince of Life is King. He who fed the multitudes was never immersed in thoughts of a world which for a time He had left, but profoundly moved by the beauty of the lilies in the fields, and the mystery of the wind, and the strength of the hills.

And we who are hurrying towards inevitable death may at least occupy ourselves in the interval with a life that is so precious and so fleeting. Ready to catch the beauty of the clouds over the sea or the passing glory of the hills ; not to be interrupted by any immortal business, since in a world that will soon forget us mortality is so sweet.

**ST. AUGUSTINE**





## St. Augustine

**I**T has been said of St. Augustine by a well known and delightful essayist of our day, that sincerity was above all else his characteristic mood. And yet, if we compare his "Confessions" for one moment with the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius, or with that perfect expression of the true Middle Age, the book of Thomas à Kempis, it is as though one compared a pressed narcissus with the living flower, white and full of odour and sweetness.

He was the realist of an unfortunate age. But with all his passion that was mediæval, and with all his tears and with all his prayers and terrible experiences, he could not throw his soul across a thousand thousand years, like Santa Teresa, that "undaunted daughter of desires," nor see the marvellous drama of life and death like Dante, nor hold us with his words as even Savonarola does to-day.

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What were his talks so late, so late with his mother who believed in him, compared with those of St. Francis with the flowers and the earth, or with his little nuns? And though he would pray to God to "consider the frailty of our nature," he does not scruple to lay upon it a burden too heavy to be borne. His soul is smooth with a polished smoothness that is slippery, so that we shall fall before we can get away from him. For he is both more and less than a man. He has purged away from him everything that would have hurt the feet of the saints. He is incapable of love that does not include hate; he is the passion that flames up for a moment in all dying things. He alone of all men began to die the moment he was born; and bit by bit he entered into a friendship with corruption. Had he been an emperor he would have rivalled that great artist, Nero, but on one side alone.

He was colder than ice or snow and fiercer than any fire or flame. His hands were thinner and stronger than the hands of Christ, and his skin was whiter than ivory. His eyes had looked at the stars but had never seen the sun, and had smiled with death over a grave. That boy's voice, as the voice of an angel, he hears chanting the words, "Take up and read,

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take up and read," at last lead him too to heaven, a place apart from the world, and for him almost a contradiction of it. And so with an unusual sweetness, he comes at last to be sure that "if the tumult of the world were hushed, hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air, and hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul silenced, together with all dreams and revelations, and every tongue and every sigh, we might hear His word not through any tongue of flesh nor angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, but His very self without these." And it was in this marvellous world of silence and calm that he came to his mother's deathbed, and "refrained from weeping," and, almost unconscious of death itself and its ruthless cruelty, closed her eyes. He, the first of the great saints of the Middle Ages, as we may regard him, has discovered, as a new and mighty continent, unexplored and virgin, Mystical Religion. There is no saint or mystic of all those great ones but followed him and loved him. St. Teresa gave him her hand with perfect confidence, and began that steep ascent towards the snow; for he has ventured beyond the limits of sense; no imagination can pierce to that rare ether where the silence is as the rain of heaven, and the sunrise is far below

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that place where there is neither east nor west.

From that great height and silence he sees in time the Donatist and Pelagian heresies, and like a man in a dream as though really he heard them not, but only overheard them, as it were, he writes against them, very kindly, and sorrowfully almost, with none of that fierceness with which purely spiritual things seem always to have endowed him. And it is not now, nor ever was, I think, by his controversial writings that he holds the world. For he was without real scholarship and knew little Greek and less Hebrew. But in his profound conception of the religious life, and in his mighty personality, he found the elements of his immortality. For centuries he was the great intellectual captain of the Christian Church, so that at the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants alike appealed to his authority, for indeed his dreams had captured the world, so that to us too, perhaps, at times, they seem the reality and the world itself just nothing at all, an uneasy dream, or whisper of spring. Catholic and Jansenist, Lutheran and Calvinist, all appeal to him. His large visions have blotted out a perhaps simpler landscape, impossible to remember now or to care for even could one conjure it up again.

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And now he is gone down to the grave ; but he cannot die. No fire is fierce enough, no water cold or deep enough to put out that spirit in which all Hell and Hades and Heaven dwelt, but not one bit of Earth nor a single sunbeam of the world.



ST. BENEDICT





## St. Benedict

IT is well to remember, in writing of St. Benedict, that, as with St. Dominic and St. Ignatius of Loyola, we have to take into account more than the mere personal life of the saints, wonderful and lovely though it may be; we must think of them as, before all, the founders of three of the greatest forces in the growth of European civilization, the Benedictine Order, the Dominican Order, and the Society of Jesus. And to consider for a moment the rise of Monachism itself, its ideas and motives, we shall find that before all else the idea of the monk in the first instance was flight — flight from a world that was too enthralling, or too wearying, or too wicked. Monachism is and always was, even at its birth, a direct denial or negation of the life of the world, the lust of the eye, the pride of life; and more particularly a denial of the supremacy of the intellect. Life was to be, so said the monk, simply a meditation, relieved

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it may be by manual toil, but chiefly a space of time free from distraction in which one might meditate on the life of Christ or the mercy of God. But as time went on and Christianity grew stronger, so that at last it did in reality overcome all these older things, as Paganism and Barbarism, that had been opposed to it, Monachism came to include more, much more, than that; to pass as it were through meditation into a colder, more painful world, where the light was level and always blazing, and where the sun or the moon, day or night, had lost all significance and been forgotten, where indeed shade or twilight was only to be found occasionally and by chance. So it passed away from meditation in its simplicity and serenity, at first may be into a maze of questions as to motives and actions and their effects—passed indeed into that great world of introspection and despair; and then again from that into a real mysticism, in which all things were changed, receiving new values, seen from a higher or, at least, different elevation, from a new point of view, so that what had at one time seemed of great importance appeared worthless now, and what had once been useless appeared of the utmost value. Then it passed into a kind of madness, in which diseases became almost objects of

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affection, when the imagination is flaming with a mighty fire and the brain getting colder and colder. And so at last into a wide silence, or ecstasy, from which none ever emerge, being caught up by Death, ere those walls of crystal that have so completely shut out life can be even touched again.

But to the majority of Christians, Christianity has never appeared as a Mysticism or even as mystical. They have found it ever a practical religion; for it is only few and rare minds that become mystic. So it is indeed with St. Benedict. No saint in all the Calendar more practical than he; but it is an ideal practicality, very different from that of St. Ignatius, and yet dealing with the same objects.

Born in the year 480 of wealthy parents, he no sooner comes into the world than he desires to quit it. Disgusted with the licentiousness of the Roman youth of his day, he flies whither he knows not, putting all his desire in just flight, at the age of fifteen, to the mountains of Subiaco. And so, quite unknown to himself, without any idea of what he has done, he has in reality founded western Monachism, is himself the mere tool of its first principle—its genesis, flight. Coming to Subiaco, a monk, Romanus by name, gives him the monastic habit

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and brings him to a cave in the mountains, which he chooses for his home. For three years he lives in this way, fed at times by Romanus, and at times, it is said, by the ravens like old Elijah by the brook Cherith. At last, on Easter Day, a priest finds him, and seeing that he is fasting, desires him to eat, telling him it is the great feast day, on which it is not lawful to fast. But he departs as suddenly as he had come ; and again the saint is alone. And, in the solitude, even he is not free from that desire for the world that he had repudiated so rashly, and it is said that his remembrance of some woman's face he had seen one morning in a crowded Roman street comes back to him, so that he almost forsakes his solitude to search for her. At last he is discovered by some shepherds, who mistake him for a wild beast, clothed as he is in skins.

But reports of his sanctity have spread over the country, so that certain monks beseech him to come and rule over them. Probably from a sincere humility, which is perhaps his chief characteristic, he is at last persuaded, only to find that his idealism is not to be realized among them, who, indeed, on his offering to correct their rule, try to poison him ; but the cup of water he was to drink breaks in pieces when he makes the sign of

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the cross over it. And he, the son of solitude, merely says, on the discovery of the attempt upon his life, "I was not mistaken, you see, when I said to you, your manners and mine would not agree."

Returning to Subiaco he founded twelve monasteries, placing in each twelve monks with a Superior. But once again he finds his enemies rather within than without the Church, and again, without any attempt at resistance, he flees from the slanders of a priest to Cassino, a small town on the side of a hill, on the top of which stood a temple of Apollo. Here we find that he cut down the grove of the god, broke the idol, and built two chapels, dedicating the one to St. John the Baptist and the other to St. Martin, and so was founded the great Abbey of Monte Cassino and the Benedictine Order and Rule. It is this great Rule which has governed all the monasteries of the west, founded for all time the real idea of Monachism, and to a very great extent been the means of civilizing Europe.

For "My Order," he says, "is a school in which men learn to serve God." It was that and much more. It was for some hundreds of years the only school that touched the mass of the people in all Europe. Where the Benedic-

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tines brought the cross, there also they took the plough, and so gradually brought Europe under cultivation, reclaimed the swamps and marshes, drained the wet lands and dammed the springs for the use of themselves and the people. Founded on Silence, Solitude, Prayer, Humility and Obedience, this rule was, and naturally, rather the means of doing work than of suppressing heresy or producing the mighty arguments of the schoolmen. It was, too, the friend of the Arts, almost their foster-mother. The first printing press was set up in their abbey, in Italy, and even in England it was in the abbey of the Benedictines at Westminster that Caxton printed his first book. Their care for the Liturgy, for the music of the Liturgy, that music which, almost equally with the words, is full of meaning, the old plain chant, was and is remarkable. Look where we will we cannot forget the Benedictines, for their work still stares us in the face—their work which has taken fourteen hundred years to do and is not finished yet. In great part they may be said to be the creators of modern Europe, agriculturally, as we know it. And so keeping in mind their marvellous genius for work, we find that when St. Benedict came to die, he was standing leaning on the arm of one of his ‘Brothers.’ It was standing that

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he went away with Death on his way to Heaven, in the sixty-third year of his age. His idea of interior solitude as more important even than exterior solitude has really conquered and transformed the world ; the silence of the soul, all its faculties and delicate operations hushed and waiting on God, contemplating His Passion, His Death, while the body is busy with other work of His too in the fields and the forests.





**ST. BERNARD**



## St. Bernard

THE one really splendid figure in all the years of the twelfth century, St. Bernard, is at least for us less a mystic than a man of action; a missionary rather than a monk, a diplomatist rather than a saint. Always a great man, he deserves the reputation of the inspired monk concerned after all chiefly with the spiritual welfare of man rather than that of the Captain of the Church who overcame Abelard and sent King Louis VII on his disastrous crusade.

Born in the year 1091 at Fontaines in Burgundy, he was the third son of Tescelinus, a nobleman and a soldier, and Alice his wife, who bore him six other children, of whom one, Humbeline, has been canonized. His childhood is overshadowed by that pious seriousness one finds so common in the saints, that indeed seems almost distressing to us, in its unnaturalness and absence of fun or humour. "He loved to be alone," one of his biographers

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tells us, thus in a moment marking him out from other children, who at the age when he determined to retire from the world would be engaged in imitating delightfully and not without humour the ways of a world of which they had as yet but caught a glimpse. There is indeed one altogether charming story of his youth that makes up to us perhaps for the lack of that lightheartedness and joy we miss so profoundly. On one night of Christmas he has a vision of the infant Jesus so homely and quiet that his mind seems always to have returned ever afterwards to that vision of Christmas night in any time of distress or trouble. At the age of twenty-three we find him accompanied by thirty noblemen with his brother retiring for six months to Chatillon, for the settlement of their affairs, before entering the monastery at Citeaux. In 1114 he makes his profession, becoming at last for the world what after all he had always been in his own eyes—a monk. Other houses arose, many men about that time, finding the world not to their liking, becoming monks as the only means of escape from a life that had become unbearable or from the merciless bidding of a voice; to escape the noise of war, or the romance in their hearts. So St. Bernard, growing in wisdom, is appointed Abbot of

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Clairvaux (Clara-vallis) in 1115, and owing to his curious charm and sanctity is soon surrounded by over a hundred monks.

But, Bernard, famed far and wide for his austerities, is suddenly reminded that the body too perhaps is as subtile as the soul, as sensitive, as wonderful in its retaliation. His life was despaired of in 1116 owing to his harshness to himself. Yet he prudently learned to correct this enthusiasm, practising, not merely perhaps for his own sake, a mildness quite new to him, making in these physical matters some sort of allowance for the weakness of mere human nature. And it is really in this question that he asks himself—how to live well?—implying as it does perhaps some hesitation, it scarcely becomes even so solid a thing as a doubt as to the right way of life, that he is so interesting to us. Long afterwards, he comes to write a treatise—a Rule of Good Life, that resolves itself in the end into the one precept “That a man ought at all times to have God in remembrance.” The great saints have been for the most part noticeably single-minded servants of God. Nor is St. Bernard any exception. In 1113 he had founded a house for nuns of his order at Billette; thither he brings his sister St. Humbeline in 1124—only that she might die it would seem after

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seventeen years of preparation in 1141. And it is the same with all his world ; it leaves him, he cannot retain anything for himself save the love of God only. After recovering from one of his illnesses, brought on by the excessive penance he persisted in using, he sets out on a journey preaching from place to place, finding indeed in the spoken word his real gift, becoming in a sense by its means master of a world where princes and nobles, great soldiers and chancellors are attentive when he speaks. And it is less by art than by his sincerity and humility that his influence grows. That his eloquence was as great as his humility is doubtful, seeing that he refused bishoprics not only in his own land but in Genoa and Milan. His influence too is felt at last throughout Europe, so that even in England King Henry I listens to him, and in consequence supports Innocent II in the papacy, as did also Louis VI of France—he also under the influence of St. Bernard, whose name, really in spite of himself, has rung through Christendom. So from the presence of kings he retires to the silence of Clairvaux, finding himself in that place, he seems to suggest, nearer to the King of kings in his conversations with his monks than while directing the great business of the world. But the world after all, even in those

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days, was not concerned with God, but with its own entrancing spectacle of beauty or glory. And St. Bernard is indeed scarcely back again at Clairvaux when he is summoned to Guienne, where Duke William, having taken up the cause of the false pope, is persecuting the followers of Innocent II and has indeed already expelled the bishops of Poitiers and Limoges. Other sins besides that of resistance against the Church this strong man had upon his conscience, so that he is at last excommunicated ; and when St. Bernard, longing for his conversion, comes to Chatelliers, Duke William is compelled to remain without the church during the singing of Mass. It is an extraordinarily human picture ; the great Duke, sullen and angry, among his soldiers and captains surrounded by countless spears, waiting at the church door for the coming of St. Bernard. And suddenly the door is thrown open and he comes, no longer a suppliant, no longer entreating repentance and penance ; but “ with a voice of authority,” he says, “ hitherto we have entreated you and prayed you and you have always slighted us. Now therefore the Son of the Virgin the Lord Christ, the Head of the Church which you persecute, comes in person to see if you will repent. Will you despise Him ? Will you be able to

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slight Him as you have done His servants? Will you?" One finds the Duke almost swooning, unable to do aught but be reconciled to God and the Church, and with the white Host still on the Paten St. Bernard re-enters the Church and completes the sacrifice. It is now that we find St. Bernard of his own free will meeting Abelard in perhaps the most famous encounter of the middle age. Peter Abelard, known to us chiefly as the romantic lover of Heloïse, was born near Nantes in 1079. He was engrossed in the study of philosophy. Whether indeed it is true, as is asserted of him, that he delighted in disputation for its own sake, or, as seems more likely, that he was in reality a dreamer only less able in thought than St. Bernard is a matter that can never be decided. Having been chosen as one of the most famous professors in Paris for the teacher of the beautiful Heloïse, suddenly a great passion blazed in their hearts, and Abelard found himself disgraced and turned from the house of his patron, the uncle of Heloïse. She followed him into his own land, where she gave birth to a son, called Astrolabe. This however was but the beginning of his troubles. Made an eunuch by the relatives of his mistress, he entered the monastery of St. Denis "from shame not from vocation,"



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as he says. She also whose beauty had entrapped him became a nun at Argenteuil. Expelled from the Abbey for heresy in 1121 at Soissons, he was obliged to burn his book on the Trinity, afterwards finding himself a prisoner in the monastery of St. Medard. He in time however, becomes, after all his misfortunes, Abbot of St. Gildas in Brittany, giving his first nunnery to Heloïse. It was then that the letters famous throughout Europe passed between them. It would appear from the letters themselves that there was no sign of repentance for that love which after all must have been really the one exquisite thing in their lives, for either of them. There, too, Abelard wrote the memoirs of his life down to the year 1134.

But his health, never strong, began to decay, and on April 21, 1142, he died in the Priory of St. Marcellus where he had gone for the sake of the air, supposed to be particularly clear and nimble in that place.

And the power that would never let him rest, that never really forgot or forgave him, not we may believe from any personal malice but because of the errors the Church held that he taught, was St. Bernard. Openly at last St. Bernard is to meet him after taunts of cowardice, and to encounter him face to face.

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Abelard however, never, it must be owned, a very noble or heroic character in the picture of that curious age, suddenly becomes afraid and refuses to meet him whom he had come to know as a formidable adversary. And his mistakes in religion, those that he is charged with at least, are not really mistakes at all, but heresies, which are, so St. Bernard continually insists, impossible to overlook. As when he is charged with denying the doctrine of the Holy Trinity with Arius, or disbelieving the Incarnation with Nestorius, of Pelagianism, and Pride. And yet it may be that in that passionate soul there lay sleeping the liberty that has, one may sometimes believe at least, enriched our own world even if we do not owe almost everything to it. The desire of the human intelligence to play with all the enigmas of the universe, not in any sense of humility but with passion and enthusiasm, is but expressed perfectly logically in another way too by Abelard in his freedom of heart, his enthusiasm for life, for love, and and all the extraordinary liberty and lightness of mind to be found in just that. If it is true that "the young men sang his songs composed in the vulgar tongue on the quay below the house where Heloïse lived," there is something wonderful in it; for though St. Bernard too can

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write verses that stir the hearts of men even to-day, they are writ in Latin and are few. Behind Abelard and the secret and powerful influence on the hearts of men of the beauty of Heloïse, behind just the Romance of all that, there lay a new spirit—the spirit of Revolution, stronger than a great river in flood—terrible as an army with banners. Arnold of Brescia, Abelard's disciple, was already on his way to martyrdom, or at least a not quite justified execution, for preaching among other things a new spirituality, that the Pope and clergy should have no temporal power or property. It is the Revolution that one sees dimly as yet but most certainly, against which St. Bernard spends the tremendous weapon of his eloquence, his genius, his holy life—in vain.

In 1153 not realizing, it is true, the completeness of his defeat, Bernard is nevertheless a broken man. "The saints," he says, "were moved to pray for the corporal dissolution out of a desire of serving Christ ; but I am forced hence by scandals and evils ; I confess myself overcome by the violence of storms and through want of courage." He recovered somewhat from this fit of gloomy desire, but knowing it was only for a short time, he warned his followers of his approaching death.

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And after all it is in a marvellous sweet way that he entered heaven at last, having made peace between the people of Metz and their enemies. Coming back to Clairvaux in the hot weather of the month of August, 1153, being sixty-two years old, he set out for heaven. His verses, we may be sure, following him as sung by his monks in that lonely way. And he was buried, as indeed was fit, before Our Lady's altar at Clairvaux, the Church adopting his song of praise to the Blessed Virgin for her own, welding it into her own song, giving it thereby a serene immortality. To that sweet and glorious hymn, "Salve Regina," St. Bernard has alone of all saints been allowed to add the three magnificent vocatives at the end, "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria."

The three pearls that he laid so softly at the feet of Mary come to us across nearly a thousand years without loss of perfection or pathos. Place them beside the crown of the Rosary and you will find they are not less perfect, only a little simpler and sweeter and more loving. Her feet, where he laid them, are already too white for any gold to burn beside, it is only the simplest and most perfect jewels she can bear after the human tears of the "Salve Regina." Upon her head have

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fallen all the life and sweetness and hope of mankind, but her eyes are satiated with tears, and her head is weary of bending to catch our faint supplications. The gold and jewels of the Rosary have wearied her, and she who is our Advocate almost avoids the weeping eyes of a world that never gives her peace. The cries of a world concerned with its own salvation, eternally busied with invoking her aid, her pity and prayers are but the music she has heard for a thousand years. But a new song arises, and she hears for the first time the three new names that man has given her, "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria," and her eyelids are no longer heavy with weariness, nor her ears deaf with a repeated song, and it is almost with a new joy she listens to the versicle, "Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei genetrix, ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi."



ST. DOMINIC





## St. Dominic

**I**F St. Benedict and the Benedictines sought the solitude of the mountains and the forests, and gave themselves up largely to manual labour and agriculture, as their mission to the world, St. Dominic and the Dominicans were the great and proclaimed missionaries of the newer age, and their work in the world and for the world lay in preaching and teaching. For by the year 1170 the mighty forces of Paganism and Barbarism had as it were been dissolved secretly, almost by the essence of Christianity, or had fallen to pieces, and at last had almost disappeared before a foe that had indeed scarcely proclaimed itself. It had been the work of the Benedictines to accomplish this, to establish themselves even in the most inaccessible places and work: till the ground, build reservoirs for spring water, and, almost as an afterthought as it were, set up the cross or crucifix by the wayside.

But for St. Dominic the world is changed,

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the inspired tactics of the time of St. Benedict are no longer useful, the world is Christian now ; only vast tracts of land and country are peopled with those who as it were have not heard of Christ quite plainly, and so are making mistakes in Religion, in Faith, in Doctrine.

And so St. Dominic and the Dominicans adopt quite other tactics ; it is necessary to come down from the mountains, to come out of the forests, and to teach and preach, not as an afterthought, but first and foremost, with the missionary enterprise proclaimed and all the errors of heresy denounced. And so we come upon the second great educating, civilizing idea in Europe, that to a large extent and for a long time, superseded as it were the older Benedictine idea ; reasoning and arguing with men, rather than merely setting an example ; appealing to the intellect rather than the blind moral nature. St. Dominic too was to be superseded in time, but that time was not yet ; and so it is possible to examine the beginnings of this new idea and to see its results in a way that is not possible with his successors, for the results of their education, of their power and work are not yet wholly come upon us.

Born in 1170 at Calarnoga in Old Castille, St. Dominic was a third son of the noble house

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of Guzman. It is said that his mother dreamed, when she was with child of him, that she had brought forth a whelp that carried a burning torch in its mouth, setting fire to the whole world; while his godmother, as she held him at the font, saw a splendid star descend on him, and to this day the emblem of the Dominican Order is a star on the forehead.

As a child we catch sight of him assisting his uncle, a priest, at Mass, and it is with something of the young Ion of Euripides about him, some indefinable charm or sweetness of manner, that he goes through life, so that we follow him as the people did in his own day with a great love and tenderness. He is something of a scholar too, going to the University at Salamanca, where one may suppose that at least he succeeded in exercising that marvellous influence over men, that was afterwards in all his work perhaps his chief weapon. In 1198 the Bishop of Osma invites him to accept a canonry in his diocese, which he does, assisting the Bishop there for five years. And then quite suddenly, and in a most splendid manner, his travels begin. As the servant of a king he sets out in the Bishop's company to arrange a marriage between the King of Castille's son, Prince Ferdinand, and the daughter

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of the Earl of La Marche. By chance one night they halt in Languedoc, a place full of those who had fallen into the Albigensian heresy, but St. Dominic, talking with the host in whose house they lodged, perfectly converted him, in the course of the night, setting out the next morning rejoicing.

The marriage arranged, he returns with the Bishop, only to be sent back again, in even more splendid manner to conduct the Princess into Spain ; but he comes only in time to witness her funeral, in the sunshine, it is said, and the flickering of the candles.

That is, it seems to us, almost a perfect picture of the middle age. So we might find it painted on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa by Andrea Orcagna or another. And so St. Dominic, still with the Bishop, sets out for Rome, to see the city, scholar as he is, and the Pope too, and to get his leave for his great enterprise.

Reluctantly and almost against his will, the Pope gives him leave to return to Languedoc, with the Bishop, who is to remain there however but two years. And under the influence of that Eternal City his ideas develop, so that he determines to go back on foot, without money, or provisions, trusting to the fortune of the way, and the unforgetfulness of God.

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And it is so we may picture him setting out from Rome on his great enterprise, almost alone, a man of noble family, very young too, and still full of the glamour of youth, barefoot on his way to conquer the world, beginning with Languedoc. On their return they find chaos, the priest slain, the churches burnt by bandits, the sacristies pillaged and the sacred vestments given to womenfolk, to wear for apparel. It is against these furious soldiers, robbers and bandits then, that he who would conquer the world must first place himself, trying almost for the first time the temper of that mighty sword of his, the spoken word, the voice, and the syllables of Christ. In the course of two years he accomplishes much under the Bishop of Osma, who then returns under the command of the Pope, leaving him alone as superior of the mission, an appointment confirmed to him by the Pope in 1207.

It was during this mission to Languedoc in the midst of war and famine and slaughter that St. Dominic instituted and composed that marvellous crown of prayers the Devotion of the Rosary. A crown not of thorns, but of living jewels, consisting of the fifteen pearls of the Paternoster, the fifteen rubies of the Glorias, and the one hundred and fifty sapphires of the Aves, set in the pure gold of the

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fifteen joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of our Lord's Life and Death, bound together by them to the Cross. Ah, though Gallileo could number the stars, and see the earth itself as a mighty circle bound round by the intelligence of man, though we can count the weary miles to the sun, and find the new moon in the adoring sea, though we have taken the laws of heaven captive and bound them to our will; he circled heaven with his prayers, and each prayer was as an angel's wings for swiftness. His Glorias have silenced the Heavenly Choirs, Christ will not resist the sweet rain of his Paternosters, and he has filled the Virgin's lap with his Aves. All the winds of heaven are powerless to put out the million flames of his prayers, for they have taken the world captive too, and set the bells of all the churches to their music in the morning, and at noon and at sunset. No son of man so happy but can tell his jewels, none so wretched but will wash them with his tears, and in a thousand thousand monasteries in all the world those who take on them the sins of the sinner number his numberless prayers in the circle of his Rosary.

It was in 1215, after St. Dominic had spent ten years in Languedoc, that he established there his Order of preaching Friars. The idea of

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mere contemplation was to be as far from them as from the Benedictines, differing in this from the ancient desert monks; for though he exalts and enjoins meditation he adds thereto other exercises, among them especially the practice of preaching. Fasting, abstinence and poverty with prayer, all these were to be practised almost, it would seem, as a matter of course; but the great central idea that was as it were to give life and reason to all these other things was that of evangelization, preaching, teaching those who by some misfortune, some accident of birth or environment, were ignorant of what to him seemed so important, such marvellous good news. And it was about this time that one Peter Cellani gave him some houses in Toulouse, where he immediately sets about establishing his Order. And in the year 1216 he sets out again for Rome, to get his order established by the Pope and confirmed by him. And so he was present, at the fourth great Council at the Lateran, where, curiously enough, were enacted decrees enjoining the faithful to confess to their parish priests once a year, at the least, and to receive the Eucharist at the least every Easter.

Men who had the gift of words, men who could move the people with words, it was

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these he wanted, so that he sets about promoting the study of literature in his Order at Toulouse, seeing maybe that the study of words, day after day spent with them, would at last give his brothers real feeling, emotion for them, so that they would use them in the end as a well known sword, with effect and confidence.

In 1218 we find him in Spain, where he founds a convent in the marvellous city of Segovia, and another in Madrid, and so back again to France, and from there to Bologna, in Italy, which city he makes his home till the end of his life. And all this time he is founding monasteries really all over Europe, in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Greece, Austria, Hungary, England, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Servia, Bosnia, and other places. And he preaches too himself, sometimes on the country roads, as well as in the churches, teaching the doctrines of the Church, stamping out heresies, civilizing Europe by means of the reason, as St. Benedict had done by his example of work.

Until one morning as he set out from Bologna for Milan, leaving that town of curious leaning towers, surely never one of the more beautiful cities of Italy, he had a vision of his death. "You now see me in health," he says



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to his friends, "but before the glorious Assumption of the Virgin Mother I shall depart to God." And so it happened. Coming back to Bologna in the summer's heat, he is seized with fever, and on August 6, 1221, he dies, with a promise on his lips, never to forget the monks of his Order, some of whom stood weeping round him. And he had conquered the world, that star on the forehead in allusion to "a certain radiance" on his brow which those saw who looked at him intently, was indeed a fact; he had lighted up the world, and, perhaps without knowing it, laid the foundation of the modern spirit, the spirit of reason.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



## St. Francis of Assisi

**A** GREAT cheerfulness seems to be the characteristic temperament of so few of the saints, or indeed of the world itself, that it is almost with a kind of glad surprise, men have always loved St. Francis, as though in truth he alone had somehow transformed Christian asceticism, giving to it something from outside, something of his own, something perhaps that it really lacked until his day, and has lost since.

Born at Assisi in 1182, while his father was on a journey to France, he was christened Giovanni; but his father, being, one may suppose, of as simple and whimsical a nature as his son, on his return would call him nothing but Il Francesco—the little Frenchman. Of his early life we know little, save that he was gently brought up, and that his father wished him to enter his own trade. But an illness seems to have turned the boy's thoughts into another channel, and in his

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twenty-sixth year he abandoned his inheritance, vowed perpetual poverty, and began that journey through life in which he continued to the end, not in gloom or dryness of spirit, but with a song on his lips, a song to whose music at last he passed, as Brother Leo says, "away unto the Lord Jesus Christ, whom with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, he loved, following him most perfectly."

And in spite of the crude asceticism of his day, the desire for pain, or cold, or filthiness as insults to the body he too despised, there is always an inward melody in his life, so that we find the prayer he prescribed for his "best loved brothers," the Friars Minor, was one of praise: "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee because by Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world." This cheerfulness too comes out in another way, for the habit of the Order had been of a grey colour, which he early changed to the warmer and more homely brown, that soon was indeed to carry his name into all the world linked with that of Christ. His chief vow, that of poverty, too, seems not to have been altogether without an appeal to him quite other than that set forth in his Rule. The Friars are not like the monks to vow merely personal poverty, but

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are to have nothing in common even, for they are pilgrims and strangers; not here but in heaven is their place of abiding. And in so sweeping a condemnation of wealth, or substance, or houses or lands, one seems to trace a desire to make his brothers missionaries, travellers, pilgrims, strangers, with all the joy to be found in a life of wandering, the delights of the road, the surprise always to be found in that sort of life in the word "to-morrow," the love of strange sights and men, and the real fishing for their souls. Brother Leo says of him, "that above all creatures lacking reason, it was the sun he loved." And it is such a picture we must have of him, making joyous songs out of doors in the sunshine or under dripping trees, when perhaps for a moment, when the sky was red as with Christ's blood in the evening, or a cloud cast a shadow on the snow or the dazzling hills, his joyous songs would be turned into tears and pity for Christ.

How far away is he from that terrible introspection of the later saints, that self-torture of the soul when, as it were, they led their souls into the deserts and poured dust upon them. Yet he too has his visions, the voice of Christ is no less clear to him, nor are his wounds less grievous; did he not bear the

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stigmata of Christ with rejoicing and yet soberly too? Nor in any way does he come short of the beauty of holiness. He too puts devils to flight by words of humility, yet he will rebuke a companion that is sad in the face. And the whole of his rule can be summed up in that saying of his to his brothers. "A Religious only preacheth well, inasmuch as he worketh well, for the doer is known by his works." And in the midst of all this innocency of spirit and simplicity of thought and reasoning that is perhaps his most delightful characteristic, we come upon so profound a thought as this: "For what remaineth when the soul is without spiritual delights, but for the flesh to turn back to its own delights." And so to him the natural world made its appeal not without success. He alone of all saints loved the world too well to despise its beauty, and somehow owing to some natural purity of understanding that he was born with, understood that even it too was lawful and not to be forgotten. Of all birds it was said he loved best the crested lark for that she had a hood like a Religious, and was humble too, finding her food by the wayside. Her feathers were the colour of the earth, and when she flew into the sky, she praised God very sweetly, looking down



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on earthly things. And we find that in the evening, after vespers, before the night wherein he died, as the sun set after rain, and all the world was as it were made new, a multitude of these little birds came over the roof of the house where he lay, as indeed is no uncommon sight, and wheeling in a circle over the roof by their sweet singing seemed to the dying saint to be praising the Lord along with him. And so he died. Yet it is he and his "praises" and his love of natural things rather than his mighty Order that have kept his name green, and shall do among all those others that are withering on the lips of the world,

Ah, he is a man so like to Christ that in himself almost he is a picture—an imitation of Him. He loved water and stones, the trees and the flowers, the birds sang him up to heaven and praised him to the angels, and they have kept his memory green. He is so cheerful, it would seem Christ spoke with him from heaven as he says. No sound of tears or weeping, no silence of unimaginable sorrows, no wild experience of Teresa, no moody mysticism of St. John of the Cross, can ever make us doubt him, or silence his French songs by the way. Those mysterious saints, soaring far beyond the light or darkness of

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the world, whose day and night were ever a piercing starlight, where no shadows fall, had forgotten him. He loved the sun that he knew fell on Christ's head too, and the rain that drenched and chilled him. He too considered the lilies and found them passing fair, and remembered that the winds came from God's treasures. Ah, he was weary too at night, and slept while the tears dried upon his cheeks ; and laughed and wept and sang over the Umbrian hills seven hundred years ago, and loved his God and served him well in the world.

THE BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO



# The Blessed Angela of Foligno

THAT Christian mysticism is neither a mere reproduction of the experience of Asiatic ascetics nor a madness that has occasionally possessed the mind of those few who, it may be, have dared to think too profoundly and intimately of God is evident to us almost at once on reading the Book of the Visions of the Blessed Angela of Foligno. A daughter of St. Francis, she is even in her wildest experiences still in touch with the world that had not always been a matter of indifference to her. While failing to reach the profound and solemn wisdom of St. Teresa or St. John of the Cross she continues always to retain a little humanity, so that one loves her more than those others, finding in her simplicity something that is almost of ourselves, transfigured by a great light. Of her life we know almost nothing beside the few facts contained

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in her autobiography, and even the year of her birth is doubtful. And yet one is content; the few facts of her life are significant of much; they suggest at least what can never be made certain.

It is perhaps almost with a feeling of relief we learn that her childhood was not overshadowed by the seriousness of that dream of eternal life, that self-examination and introspection, that in the lives of St. Teresa and St. Catherine of Siena are to the modern mind, with its curious delight in childhood, so distressing. Happiness! after all that is the peculiar right of childhood, a right less often enjoyed than is generally supposed, one may think. And yet, indeed, that freedom from serious preoccupation, that dreamy wellbeing, with the limitless horizons of childhood, ignorant of the necessity of death, have something of that serious, almost profound contentment that is happiness or something very near to it, that one loses completely as one grows older, how completely one only realizes in reading the lives of the saints.

For Blessed Angela we may believe that state of childhood lasted long—till indeed we find her married and the world breaking in on that silence and the sweetness of life concealing the true death, calling her, calling her, and al-

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most without thinking, scarcely wakened from that pleasant dream, she runs with open arms into the world that has entrapped her. How long her captivity lasted we do not know—"many years," she herself says—until one day at dawn perhaps, or at evening, in the silence of the sunshine, or in the song of the stars, she hears a voice irresistible, implacable, and almost like a frightened child she discovers herself, sees herself really for the first time, becomes self-conscious, and bursts into tears. And in the overwhelming impulse of that moment she decides to go to confession, a duty forgotten in the long sweet business of the world. But before that crucifix that was gradually becoming so real and terrible a fact to her she was afraid and could not tell the more grievous of her sins; and again, with a feeling of remorse almost, profoundly curious, fearing the impossibility of ever separating herself from that supreme and terrible love, she swiftly communicated, adding sacrilege to her other sins.

And now her conscience, hitherto almost silent, awakens, suddenly and violently accusing her day and night without rest, so that in utter dismay and terror she flies to her old Father St. Francis, beseeching him for his aid in many things, especially asking him to send

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her a confessor who will understand her sins. And it was in the morning after her appeal to St. Francis that she finds a friar, "a true Chaplain of Christ," preaching in the church of St. Felician, to whom she makes a full confession in bitterness, shame and grief, receiving, still with those after sobs shaking her like a weary child, his absolution.

It was from this point Blessed Angela set out upon her slow and wonderful journey towards purification. Nor is there anything easy, or even pleasant by the way. For many years, she says, she was full of grief and without consolation.

In her simple and still child-like way she traces her progress for us in the little chapters of her life. Here she considers among other things the mercy of God; applying herself after she began to be enlightened by that profound love, to a severer penance "of which," says she, "I speak not here."

In the terrible caverns of the self-accusing spirit, far from any light of day or sound of life, what agony of darkness has not the soul of man suffered, what fear in the hissing silence, since Christ rose from the dead! The experiences of man in these encounters with himself have become in our own day something very far removed from the Visions of



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Blessed Angela, have become indeed ugly and consumed with a desire that is almost never spiritual. Yet gross as one may suppose had been the life of the Blessed Angela before, she heard that most sweet voice calling her over the Umbrian hills, it is in a mood as simple as that of a maiden that she desires to be gathered to the heart of God, that she hears indeed the words of Christ as the words of a splendid Lover.

“After this,” she says, speaking of an ecstasy of prayer, “after this I went to St. Francis’s, at Assisi, and as I went along the way praying, just as I had arrived between the cave and the narrow path which leadeth up to Assisi, and a little beyond the cave, in that place it was said unto me, “Thou hast asked of My servant Francis, and I have been pleased to send another messenger. I am the Holy Ghost, and I have come unto thee to give thee consolation which otherwise thou hadst never tasted. And I will come with thee, inwardly within thyself as far as St. Francis’s, and some of those who are with thee will notice it a little. And it is My will to come with thee and speak with thee the whole of that way, and I will not give over speaking nor wilt thou be able to listen to anything else but Me ; for I have bound thee fast and I will not depart

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from thee . . . if thou lovest Me . . . Love Me, for thou art much beloved by Me, much more than I am loved by thee!" And He added in an under breath, "I love thee more than any woman in the valley of Spoleto. Because My servant Francis hath loved me much therefore have I done much for him." And Christ speaks further with her, telling her that there were few good and at that time but little faith; and complaining, as she says, He speaks to her of the Love He bears the soul. "So great I say is the love which I have for the soul that loveth Me, without malice, that were there now any soul that perfectly loved Me I would give unto it greater grace than formerly I gave unto saints. Ah, there is not any one who can excuse himself from this love, because He Himself truly loveth the soul and He is Himself her love."

In all the lives of the saints there is not to be found anything more lovely than that walk with Christ through the vineyards of Umbria. Even St. Francis, who alone of all the saints has conquered the world, has no sweeter experience to tell, no lovelier vision, no calmer or quieter hour in all his life.

Trembling with the eagerness of love that shall be satisfied, on the eve of an experience almost too good to be true, she doubts not

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quite seriously, but playfully as it were, that this most sweet companion is indeed the Bridegroom. "He said unto me," she says, "I am He who was crucified for thee, and I had hunger and thirst for thy sake, and so much have I loved thee that I shed My blood for thee." And He told her of His passion. Then my soul cried out, "If Thou who hast talked with me from the beginning wert the Holy Ghost, Thou wouldst not tell me such great things; and if Thou wert indeed within me, so great ought to be my joy that I could not bear to live."

And like the miraculous and lovely bridegroom, Christ gives to her to whom He spoke of love, a sign. "Try now to speak with thy companions and think of other things whatsoever thou wilt whether good or evil, and thou wilt not be able to think of aught but Me."

Wrapt in the arms of Him who had silenced, not only the world, but her own spirit also, all her evil deeds came back into her memory on account of which she realized it may be for the first time that she was worthy of Hell. And it is only in great terror she can contemplate the end of the way in which Jesus accompanied her, nor is she ever willing to loose His hand again "for the whole time that the world should last."

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What a fund of human nature, resolved from all discord it is true, but still poignantly human in its cheerfulness and its simplicity, is there in that "experience" or vision!

After all she was a true Franciscan. It was against the rules of her order to be more than a little sad, cheerfulness being indeed a kind of duty in those who had heard the very voice of Jesus.

So she explains to us very sweetly that the first companion that accompanied Our Lord Jesus even unto death was Lady Poverty—most perfect, who, so great was the love of God for St. Francis, was sent even that same sweet Princess to be his companion, and the companion of all his little poor ones, all the days of the world. And with a passionate love and regret she exclaims, "O measureless madness of the world, which after that such and so great a Lord and King of kings has been treated with ignominy and contempt, is ever aspiring unto dignities and wishing for liberty, none being desirous of obedience and subjection for the love of Him, Our Lord Jesus Christ."

It was to her confessor, Brother Arnold of the Friars Minor, that she told the history of that inner life of the soul, ignoring almost entirely her actual life in the world, which was

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to her indeed but a dream. He says of her in his second Prologue to her Book of Visions and Instructions, that when at times, standing before him, her soul was lifted up she was not able "to understand anything of what I was reading to her; she was changed in the face and in the body by reason of the word which God spake to her, and so great was her devotion and delight in these consolations that at times her eyes shone like candles and her face was as a rose."

And she who had held the rose of the world so tightly in youth, so that the thorns had torn her bosom, and the perfume of the bruised petals had enveloped her, having known the wild love of the world well, ah well, threw it from her for that more excellent desire, that so transfigured her before Brother Arnold.

And it is almost with passionate ecstasy that in the last little chapter of her book she enumerates the seven gifts of this new bridegroom, who had loved her almost in spite of herself, and brought her "out of the wilderness" and spoken so sweetly to her.

Beginning really at the very beginning, she tells this Lover, as in some delightful confidence, that the first gift he gave her was Life, and the second Eternity, the third the Sacrifice of His own life, and the fourth the Reason to

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understand this, the fifth a Capacity to understand Him, the sixth Wisdom whereby we know the burning Love of God, and the seventh, Love himself, for God is Love.

And indeed almost her last words are concerning that sweet Charity without which there is neither "salvation nor merit."

"The world jests," she whispers to her children, "at what I say, namely, that a man can weep for the sins of his neighbours as for his own or even more than for his own, for it seemeth against nature. But it is charity which doeth this, and charity is not of this world."

She makes no testament, recommending to them instead, "Mutual love and profound humility."

And it was about Christmas time that she came to pass away to that Lover who had never left her for a moment since He called her from a little distance over the Umbrian hills and valleys on that morning in her youth.

Hesitating on the abyss of God's infinity, she tells those few gathered around her the profound thought that had come to her almost from that other world for which she was about to set out. "Know ye not," she says, "that Christ was in the ship while the Tempest was great? Even so is it sometimes in the world,

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when He permitteth temptations to come, and He Himself seemeth to sleep.”

It was after Compline on the Octave of the Innocents’ Day that having lain all day exceeding joyful in quiet of body and gladness of spirit, at the last hour of the day she fell into a light sleep, and caught up in some dream or vision more lovely by far than any that had come to her before, she let life fall, and was presented to God by Him who had loved her even from the beginning.





ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA



## St. Catharine of Siena

“At her voice, nay, only looking upon her, hearts were changed.”

**A** MYSTIC, with a genius for politics, might very well be the conclusion to which one might come, even after reading the very barest account of St. Catharine's life. In the swift thirty-three years of her life she changed politically the aspect of Europe, found a power and authority greater almost than that of the papacy itself thrust upon her, and the silence that she had been preparing for herself for years is rudely broken, and the accumulated forces of spirit, hoarded through years of complete silence, are thrown across Italy and the world, completely overcoming it. I suppose no saint that ever lived wielded half her power, and indeed few statesmen, even of the greatest, have had harder problems to solve, or so short a time in which to solve them.

Born in Siena in 1347, we know really nothing of her childhood. In her twentieth

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year, however, she received the habit of the Third Order of St. Dominic and retired from the world, making her cell, indeed, her little earth, refusing all knowledge of anything beyond, sure, with that confidence which is so characteristic of her, that within those narrow walls were earth, heaven and all. During three years she spoke to no one, save only to God and her confessor ; for, as she says in one of her treatises, " God had taught her to build in her soul a private closet, strongly vaulted with Divine providence, and to keep herself always close and retired there. He had assured her that by this means she should find peace and perpetual repose in her soul which no storm or trouble would disturb." And here we have perhaps a miracle indeed. So unlearned that she had never been taught to read or write, she becomes " a writer of singular beauty, force and distinction." Divining theological truths, taught as it were by her own contemplative soul, which she had hushed and silenced for so long that the very whispers of God were to her plain and commanding, she was as one who listens to the wind, finding therein a promise of rain, so that from many miles away she can hear the thirsty lands drinking in the moisture, or the tired flowers gasping and lifting their heads. And

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her language is never that of controversy, but of persuasion or statement. Her genius was, indeed, the direct result of years of contemplation, so that she had, as it were, by this means, pressed into her life the experience of age ere she was fully grown, and learned the secrets of the soul,—contemplation, stained by filthy imaginings, that cannot touch the calm of her unsullied soul, that is indeed but the means of showing her the nearness of Christ, so that she has but to stretch out her hand, as it were, to touch Him, even at the most terrible moments. It is an early example of that mysticism, afterwards pursued so much higher and further by St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, different somewhat from the mysticism of the north, as one sees it in St. Lydwid in Holland. Here are no bizarre and cold imaginings, no terrors of the mist or the hum of the wind or the white horror of the snow and the fierceness of the north, but the experiences of the soul itself, that is not born in the unfriendly dark but in the mysteries of sunlight and silent serene days. She has found out the secrets of the soul, so that “at the sound of her voice, nay only looking upon her, hearts were changed.” As a spiritual counsellor she is unequalled, no self-deception, no mannerism of piety can blind her, for she has learned the

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language of the soul, letter by letter she has learned it during three years of silence, in which the voice of God is so low as to send not even a ripple on the air that is heavy with her contemplation.

And she is awakened from this dream of Heaven and heavenly things at last by the pestilence of 1374, so that still half in a dream and with wonderful words, not to be understood of those that heard her, on her lips, she devotes herself to those struck down by the infection, and cures many perhaps by her mere presence, shining with the light of her own thoughts of that other world she had but just left.

In 1375 she is at Pisa, and while there the people of Florence and Perugia rise against the Pope, absent in Avignon. Those warring principles of Guelf and Ghibelline have united at last to strip the papacy of its lands in Italy, emblazoning on their banners, even as in our own day, that terrible and impossible word, "Libertas." And now, at length, she has awakened, thrown off the glamour of her dreams, and descended, a very angel, a deliverer, upon a world that has at last become self-conscious. By her words the people of Arezzo and Siena are kept from joining the Florentine League. The swiftness of her acts is incredible, her

power over a people to whom she was almost unknown absolute and supreme. For it is to her the Florentines appeal, perhaps because they can scarcely help themselves. She agrees to come to Florence, the chief magistrates of that city meet her at their gates, and send her forward before them with almost regal honours to Avignon, where she arrives June 18, 1376. It is a wonderful picture, not to be matched, I think, in history ; this young girl, twenty-nine years of age, sent forth to meet the Pope to arrange terms of peace with him, to face his cardinals, alone. And she is successful, and more than successful ; she gains the mastery and bends the papacy to her will, to her idea. The Pope desires nothing but peace. "I put the affair entirely in your hands," he says, "only I recommend to you the honour of the Church." It is not peace, however, as she has perhaps already discovered, that the Florentines desire—not peace, but surrender. She persuades the Pope to return to Rome. Pope John XXII, a Frenchman, had taken up his residence in Avignon, and since then the Popes had lived there. That, it seems to her, was the initial mistake. And so the Pope, Gregory XI it was, agrees to return to Rome, sending her before him to Genoa, where she meets him and enters Rome with him.

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Ah, she fulfilled the Dominican ideal—a union of mystical and practical life; not only in the soul but in the world too is God's kingdom, and so, as in the religious so in the political world, she played "the most distinguished part of her century." The Pope would not enter Rome without her, fearing his own weakness and the enmity of the cardinals. To him she says, "Be a brave man and not a coward." It is not the Church that needs reform, she thinks, but only its ministers and pastors.

On his return to Rome the Pope sends her to Florence for peace, and she brings it him, but only after the most terrible struggle.

Amid scenes of daily violence and murder, in which her own life is threatened again and again, one finds her undaunted even when swords are drawn against her; and so she conquers, bringing peace in 1378, and immediately returns to Siena, to her cell. Against her will she had left that silent life, and at the first opportunity she returns to it, to pray.

Her knowledge of heavenly things—it is that she sets store by. So we find her in a vision presented by Christ with two crowns, the one of thorns and the other of gold, and bidden to choose. "I desire, O Lord," she says, "to live here always, conformed to Thy passion, and to find pain and suffering my delight."



And so she takes the crown of thorns, pressing it forcibly on her forehead behind whose white wall there lived the governing intellect of her world.

Creeping into her life—a life that is full of movement and passion in spite of herself—one finds one more great experience, that of love. That Stephen loved her I think there is no doubt; a man of noble family, almost come to ruin, alone in the world and still young, who follows her with an absolute devotion for the rest of her days. He becomes at last a Carthusian monk. No sound of passion or falling of the tears of love could reach that soul which had been unmoved and unafraid in the noise of revolution and the passion of liberty. She who had held a people in leash had long since learned to subdue her own heart, so that she is silent under her thoughts, and he never told his love. Ruled by her will, swept away into victory by her implacable desire, we see a multitude clothed in ashes and in scarlet “in iron and gold.” Kings, Queens, Popes and Princes, harlots and soldiers, monks and friars, cardinals and hermits, all the wretched and magnificent in her century bring themselves to her obedience, whom none dared advise she has persuaded, what none dared attempt she has done, armed, as she herself

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has profoundly said, "with her own sensuality," and the flaming sword of her unquenchable spirit.

But it was in grief, and yet not because of it, that she died at thirty-three years of age. For the people chose, in 1378, another Pope, Urban VI, and under this new "libertas" she "would dissolve into floods of tears." So they buried her, who would have saved them, in Rome, in the Church of the Minerva, in 1380.

And her weeping has not ceased with the years; that spirit that she quelled and led captive, and would have taught, in her infinite experience, the things that are beyond the wild dreams of noise and struggle, has overcome the world; but shall in no wise conquer that quiet spirit that still lives and dreams behind the walls of an Eternal City, and is the same to-day as yesterday, and is calm under all the shoutings of the multitude, with eyes fixed on the Eternal and hands clasped in the grasp of God, in the silence of all worlds and the winds of a thousand generations.

ST. CATHERINE ADORNI



# St Catherine Adorni

“THE SERAPH OF GENOA”

**I**N the middle of the fifteenth century, when the spirit of the middle age was dying so surely, and the new ideas that the Renaissance had brought were suggesting to the minds of all men a new point of view, when people had already begun to look back on the preceding centuries as “the dark ages” it is almost with surprise we come upon so simple and unaffected a saint as Madame Catherine Adorni—St. Catherine of Genoa. Born in Genoa in 1447, she was the daughter of the vicegerent of Naples, Giacomo Fieschi by name, the heir of an illustrious line of ancestors, who had enjoyed “extraordinary privileges” from the republic of Genoa—among others that of coining money.

It would seem that from her earliest years she had been possessed by religious enthusiasm; and by the time she was twelve years old she had decided to give at least half

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her life entirely to God. It was about this time that she made application to be admitted into a convent in the white city of Genoa. Her father, however, seems to have thought her too young for any such renouncement, and at the age of sixteen gave her in marriage to Giulio Adorni—a young nobleman still in the excitement of early youth.

He, however, brought her nothing but trouble, seeing that he was not only profligate but enchanted with life; and she, pale as the crescent moon of Mary Madonna, was thinking of a heavenly Lover, letting the world slip by her unnoticed.

In all the rich and fervent life that swept up that marvellous bay, and through the hot white streets of Genoa the Proud, speaking of the works of Plato or the news from Africa, there is nothing more exquisite than that picture of the sorrowful Lady Catherine still in her first youth, looking over that antique sea at sunset, or at the stars behind those mountains, which like vast precious stones, shine behind that city of the sea, caring for none of these things, setting her desire on a country she had never seen guarded by angels. Yet as time went on she seems to have turned towards the music of the world, not altogether without hope of comfort, finding that burn-

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ing sky but a mighty shield, brazen, impenetrable, between her and the delectable country. So she turned to the fair life about her, and for a time was comforted by dawn and sunset and the sounds of life and the lights that were lit in the City of Palaces in the evening. But he who has once heard the syllables of the heavenly language, ever after is but wearied by the words of the world ; and he who has once desired heaven in his heart can never find his home in any earthly city. As of old the heart that has been pierced by the arrow of Eros is never quite sane again ; he cannot laugh, and finds no content in just reasonable things.

So after a time she too, like the others, hears the sweet implacable voice calling from the deepness of the sea or the snows of the hills, and she knows even before she can turn her head " that all happiness is in God alone." So the world fell away from her, and Desire became a coward before her pale and burning eyes, and she whose body was made for fine raiment clothes herself in coarse linen for the sake of her soul. And she who had wept before a crucifix so often for all the cruelty and all the pain of that majestic death, stretches, ah, so naively, her own body on the cross, thrusting the iron nails of her will through her

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trembling hands and feet, and, plaiting a crown of thorns, each prick a terrible resolve, she presses it down upon her forehead and tears her body with the spear of hatred. Was it a sin? Was she, in spite of all her desire, still far from that calm and serene land where God dwells with His angels—destroying so lovely a Temple—the body in which Christ dwelt—wantonly, madly, without a thought or care for that sweet handiwork of God?

In an age so fearful of physical pain as our own, is it quite fair to ask that question, biassed as we must be against anything so far from us? Ah, we have listened too long to perfect music and can find no joy in any discord, or unprepared sound of life. Life needs to bring an introduction, we are so sensitive to any rude awakening from our dream of physical life.

Not the least astonishing result of her pre-occupation, and indifference to life is the repentance of her husband, which happened on what proved to be his deathbed. He too, at the last moment having found the world to be indeed as she saw it, no fit occupation for a Christian—even in hope of winning to a better—briefly departed. Nor does St. Catherine ever seem to have thought that the approach of death had anything to do with this marvellous



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conversion. So wonderful a change she is sure needed some more miraculous explanation than that of the old and treacherous handiwork of man's ancient enemy.

About this time too she lost her brothers and sisters, one of whom at least had been very dear to her; so that at last she is really alone in the world, whispering, according to the motto she had chosen for her own, "Thy will be done."

She now devoted herself almost entirely to the care of the sick, in the great Hospital of the city, nor did even so arduous a task occupy all her time, for we find her visiting the sick in the lanes and byways of a place that even to-day is full of curious lanes and narrow paths. And in spite of all the duties she had set herself, she yet found time to write that "Treatise on Purgatory" which even in our own day has been said to be "like the utterance of one immersed in its expiation of love."<sup>1</sup> It is a work of profound simplicity and beauty. "I do not believe it would be possible," she says, "to find any joy comparable to that of a soul in Purgatory, except the joy of the blessed in Paradise—a joy which goes on increasing day by day as God more

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Manning's Preface to "A Treatise on Purgatory."

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and more flows in upon the soul, which He does abundantly in proportion as every hindrance to His entrance is consumed away. The hindrance is the rust of sin ; the fire consumes the rust and then the soul goes on laying itself open to the Divine Light."

Again, "I see that the love of God directs towards the soul certain burning rays and shafts of light, which seem penetrating and powerful enough to annihilate not merely the body, but, were it possible, the very soul itself . . . so the Divine fire acts on souls: God holds them in the furnace until every defect has been burned away, and He has brought them, each in its own degree, to some standard of perfection. Thus purified, they rest in God without any alloy of self ; their very being is God ; it is then that the soul is rendered so impassive that if she should be kept in the fire of purgatory or plunged into that of Hell, far from suffering any pain, all these fires would be to her but as a furnace of delight in the midst of which she would already be in possession of eternal felicity."

It is obvious that our "faculty of thinking is limited by our command of speech," and so it is ever in a kind of ecstasy that the real dialogue of the mind with itself, of the mind with its Creator, is uttered at last, touching

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the absolute so fantastically as almost to seem to be the mere dream of a dream. After all the real message of St. Catherine as of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross is "Love not the world!" Yet, with St. Catherine we seem to find at least some explanation—an explanation that is really a refutation of that hard saying. She who loved the world well enough to tend its sick, to feed its poor, to visit its homeless, was really only more surely possessing herself of it. So that in the end, still working as it were within her own mind and temperament, she decides that "selfishness is the root of all the evils to which we are exposed either in this life or in the future."

Towards the end of her life she became ill and suffered great bodily pain. As the soul gained in strength so the body fell into weakness and decay. Her mind however remained clear and brilliant to the last, even when the rest of her powers were dead to her. She died on September 14, 1510, being sixty-one years old. She lies buried in the chapel of the Hospital at Genoa, belonging to the religious, and even to this day her body is still perfect and visible before the high altar there.

St. Catherine of Genoa comes to remind us very sweetly of the perfection of the mystical idea, as shown practically in an entire sacrifice

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of the world, of self, of that wide and pleasant view of the world and the ways of men that to many in those days of the awakening spirit seemed perhaps the most valuable thing in life. It is not from her one can learn the more profound and obscure truths of mysticism. For to tell the truth she has not reached the great depths, but has contented herself with the more shallow places, where she is still in touch with a world sick to death and sorry and fearful of death.

Like all the saints, she is not concerned either with joy itself or with the joyful. These have no need of her and scarcely so she seems to suggest of her Master. And it is this terrible seriousness running through mysticism, this frightful enthusiasm for death, for annihilation in God, for the repudiation of self, that is answerable for most of the incomprehensible ugliness of many of its dreams. Unlike some of the Religious Orders, systems that are after all of greater significance than any single member, the saints individually are not concerned with humanity for its own sake—but only for the sake of Christ. A spiritual selfishness possesses a soul that has perhaps purged itself of less ineradicable sins. And it is this pity, this immense condescension on the part of one who can never understand it,

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that the world so much resents. I think this egotism is found less in St. Catherine of Genoa than in almost any other saint. A complete absence of this strange fault, making a void that was filled with a wide and tender love, gave St. Francis of Assisi the devotion of a world that even in its most unlikely quarters still thinks lovingly of one who "went about doing good." It should feel somewhat the same towards St. Catherine of Genoa. Her life was spent in a hospital among the sick. And if to her the highways of Purgatory were really of more importance than the streets of the Proud City, if her soul was listening only half-heartedly to the story the world told her so confidingly in those wards, at least she soothed the physical pain of those who were helpless or in the clutches of some obscure disease, or racing down the terrible vistas of a fever. It is thus we may picture her, most simple, with finger on her lip, looking forward into a land for the most part vague and shadowy, that her eyes have already seen and searched out, and of which she has sent us news.



ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA





# St. Ignatius Loyola,

## KNIGHT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

**C**RITICS of the Society of Jesus have often written as if the only characteristic of the genius of that body was a kind of extraordinary cunning, never quite honest or legitimate, seeking to entangle the very world ; not contented with any power obtained over a Government until it had enslaved the least important individuals also, aiming ever at a kingdom in the soul of man. A certain prejudice, unconscious almost, is noticeable in almost any company of men, against a Society that, consummate in everything but tact perhaps, has really surprised and frightened a world that the religious Orders till the advent of St. Ignatius had been content to despise. Almost every country in Europe has at some time in its history thought to bring glory and safety to itself by expelling the Jesuits. Even those who serve the same Master, and have sworn allegiance to the

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same Church, have not seldom proved hostile, whether from envy of almost invariable success and persecution, or from some real grievance, some ineradicable fault, does not at first sight appear certain.

Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491, the son of Don Bertram, lord of Oñez and Loyola, and heir to one of the most ancient and noble families in Spain. He was brought up in the court of Ferdinand V, surnamed the Catholic, as a page under the protection of the Duke of Najara his kinsman. Far away in the rugged country of Lower Saxony Martin Luther was a lad of eight years old. In Italy the Magnificent Lorenzo was dying in silence watched by the burning eyes of Savonarola, and Rome was heaping up riches not knowing who should gather them. Spain and France were entering Naples, and, quarrelling, Spain is left as mistress. Pope Borgia was about to poison himself in Rome with the cup prepared for another, and Julius II, surrounded by innumerable spears, to reign in his stead.

To all the confusion and splendour of that fifteenth century, Ignatius is not indifferent; brilliant, accomplished, extraordinarily handsome, he at length enters the army, and contrives to distinguish himself almost as a matter of course at the taking of Najara in

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Biscay. Shortly after, amid what splendour and rejoicing one may well imagine, Charles V, successor to The Catholic, is chosen Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, thereby making an implacable enemy of that brilliant monarch, Francis I, patron of the arts of peace and war. And it is on a day in 1521 that we catch a glimpse of Ignatius holding the town of Pampeluna, capital of Navarre, for the Emperor against the French. The cannon of the French at last succeeded in making a wide breach in the walls, whereupon Ignatius, "at the head of the bravest part of the garrison," endeavoured to drive the enemy back again, at first it would seem with some success. But a shot from a cannon hurled a stone from the walls that struck him in the left leg, and the shot itself rebounding, broke his right leg above the knee. Seeing him fall, the garrison surrendered at discretion. So it is as a wounded hero he returns to Loyola, not far away over the hills of Biscay and Navarre. In the hurry and confusion of the surrender, however, his leg had been badly set, and he who desired always a fair world, not caring to return to it less than it gave, has it broken and set again. And it was during this enforced inactivity and rest that he read almost by chance the Lives of the Saints,

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in the which he became engrossed ; and considering that those he read of were but men even as he himself, decided with that swiftness he had learned in battle to become even as they, devoting himself not to any earthly lady, who would may be have despised him for his lameness, but to Madonna Mary, Queen of Angels, who saw clear through the body even to the soul itself. So he had a vision of Mary Madonna, the infant Jesus lying in her arms, which made all earthly affections ever after seem of nothing worth.

So soon, therefore, as he is well, not to be detained by any reasons, or persuasions of brothers or friends, he sets out for Montserrat and a great Benedictine Abbey, where there is a miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin even to this day. And it is here in a certain Frenchman, John Chanoner by name, that he finds a confessor and director. Making a vow of perpetual chastity, "he dedicates himself to the Divine service." It is now not without a touch of nobility that he hangs up his sword on a pillar near the altar of the Church, in token of becoming a soldier of Christ, who must hereafter deal only with spiritual weapons. Setting out on pilgrimage from Montserrat, he comes at no great distance on a village called Manresa that was

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known for its convent of Dominicans, and their hospital for "pilgrims and sick persons." Here he practises the most terrible austerities, wearing an iron girdle, and begging his bread. And he who had led an army for the King of Spain, and shouted threats of war, and scarcely doffed his hat for the sake of a Prince, is now in his poor and ragged clothes the butt of the beggar children, followed by laughter and shouting, and stoned in the streets. Privately, timidly, almost he hides himself in the vale of Paradise, till he is discovered almost dead with hunger and brought back to Manresa to the hospital there. At Manresa he remains nearly a year perfecting himself in his rule of life.

And it is now that he throws aside his beggar's rags and dresses himself decently, moderating his austerities so that he may not offend those still in the world whom he desires above all to influence, to rule. And in order to acquire this influence he writes that famous book of Spiritual Exercises, on which he afterwards founds the Rule of the Society of Jesus.

And the world that he refused to neglect in order to cultivate his own soul in private, calls him, so that he sets out from Manresa, and, coming to Barcelona, takes ship from there

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and sets out for Italy, which he reaches at Gaeta, whence he travels afoot to Rome, Padua, and Venice, going from that last city to Cyprus first, and afterwards to Palestine, coming on foot to Jerusalem in September 1523. In January 1524 he was again in Venice, whence he returned to Barcelona, going by way of Genoa and the sea. He was now thirty-three years old, and desiring to become a priest, he strove to acquire the rudiments of the education necessary. In pursuance of his object in 1528 he walked from Salamanca, where he had been imprisoned by the grand vicar for introducing strange practices, to Paris. It was here he learned the Latin tongue, lodging in the hospital of St. James, begging his bread from day to day, journeying once, during a vacation, even to England to see the Spanish merchants there, who treated him, it would appear, with great generosity. After three years and more in Paris he is able to take the degree of Master of Arts by the help of one Peter Faber, a Savoyard. Here Ignatius also met Francis Xavier, whom he appears to have converted to a dislike of the world and glorious mortality. And it was in Paris, in 1534, in the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, that that Society of which the world has heard so

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much was really founded. Together with many others whom he appears to have influenced, he is desirous of going again to Palestine in the service of the Blessed Virgin. War however prevents this enterprise, and instead, together with some of his companions, he goes to Rome, offering the Pope service. Their company they decide shall be called the Society of Jesus, and as an encouragement as it were in the road to Rome they suddenly encounter Jesus Himself, His eyes as a flame of fire, and His countenance as the sun for brightness. And yet, together with all His splendour, "loaded with a heavy Cross." To Ignatius He speaks, saying, "Ego vobis Romae propitius ero."

And in truth they were received very graciously by Pope Paul III, who appointed one of their number, Peter Faber, as teacher of divinity in the Sapienza, and another, Laynez, to explain Scripture, and to Ignatius the Pope gave permission to "reform the manners of the people." And wishing to set his Society on a firm basis, he desires the Pope to approve his new order, which, after some opposition, is done by a Bull of September 27, 1540, in which Ignatius is appointed first General. And it is really as an army of which he is General, that he looks upon his few followers

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—an army of missionaries in the first instance, two of their number being already in the Portuguese Indies by request of the King of Portugal, And it is with a really wide charity and belief, or at least hope, in the essential worthiness of human nature that he founds a house for the reception of people so despised as the Jews, “who should be converted during instruction,” and for the women of the town, penitents, Magdalens, concerning whom, when told that their repentance is seldom perfect or lasting, he remarks, to “prevent only one sin would be a great happiness, though it cost me ever so great pains.” So far indeed did the fame of his charity spread, that not only all Italy, but Spain, Germany, and Holland also, desire the help of his Society. And it is perhaps in answer to these requests that in 1546 St. Ignatius opens his first schools, thus beginning the marvellous new system of education, under which nearly every mind that has come to real eminence in Europe has passed, almost to our own day.

Suppressed before the Great Revolution in France, it has more than once been pointed out that the men of that time represented the first generation that in the modern world had not passed under the Society's training, so that one seems to understand that indeed, as



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he says, the end of all his labours, especially in the training of the mind, was to be the "greater glory of God." He used "very harshly all those whom learning rendered self-conceited or less than devout, and removed all those masters who discovered any fondness for singular opinions." One may see the result of his efforts even in England when, as happened under James II, the Society was secretly for fear of the law introduced into this country, where in the Savoy they set up a school, which in the course of a few weeks had no less than four hundred pupils, half of them the sons of Protestants. It is indeed, looked at rightly, a new spirit that has come into the world, desiring above all things order and the habit of mind and thought that the study of grammar gives, building up knowledge upon a sure foundation. The laws of the great world, whereby for so many ages together mankind has built up the character of the human race, the perfection of Greece, the magnificence of Rome, are to be followed now in one last effort to train the soul too—a discovery after all of the middle age. And it was in thus holding fast the unbroken tradition of Europe, whether Pagan or Christian, that the extraordinary powers of the Jesuit as an educator, as a leader from darkness to light,

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as a liberator, lay. Yet behind all the superficial excellence of their method there was a more profound and eternal idea—to fit the soul equally with the mind to encounter problems, difficulties, temptations, to be quite strict with itself, and so to overcome them. It is thus that after the rise and fall of the schools of St. Benedict and St. Dominic, Ignatius Loyola stands in the breach, scarcely to be noticed at first, without outward beauty or charm, holding that fortress of the soul of man that he has so ably defended ever since. It is really as the enemy of private judgment we may watch him striding across the ages since the first Reformation. The champion of order and silence, of the beauty of all that, as opposed to the ugliness of noise or confusion. So that should one desire the freedom of thought, that appears to be so detestable in that liberty to decide for oneself questions that after all the whole world has many times given up in despair, it will be found, if one will but listen a little to him, that thought is really impossible amid a thousand different opinions shouted by as many multitudes. Were it not better to be silent, to fall in with a Church that has indeed seen with her own eyes, touched with her own hands, kissed with her own mouth, the very hands and feet

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of Him who is not to be shaken by argument or overcome by noise, who is not moved at all by uncontrolled prayer, and wild beseeching and terrible denunciations? Ah! it is to Her who is so fair under His stars, whose eyes see ever the face of Him who is Her splendid Bridegroom, so that She is silent under all the denunciation of the world, and smiles at the innumerable fires kindled to consume Her, and is at once sorrowful and triumphant, waiting till He shall come and claim Her as He has promised—it is to Her he points from all the distracting business of the world, saying, There is Truth.

At last St. Ignatius, having already established his order in every country of Europe, is “worn out with infirmities.” So that one Jerome Nadal is appointed as his assistant. And on the day before that in which he dies he begs a blessing from the Pope, so that he too may at length depart in peace. And it is on July 31, 1556, being sixty-four years old, saying over in his heart and with his tongue the sweet name of Jesus, that he dies, having done what he could.

It is hardly possible within the limits of a short essay to give the reader any idea of the extraordinary system that for nearly three hundred years practically ruled Europe. Even

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as in the "spiritual exercises" St. Ignatius had directed all the powers of the soul to the end that religion might be realized in the very habits of the scholar, so in his educational system the will and affections as well as the intelligence are brought under a discipline that aims in the end at attaching an almost aesthetic value to holiness, to goodness. So that the Beauty of Holiness shall really be the only beauty that it is possible to conceive of at all seriously, that shall ever be worthy of devotion or sacrifice.

And so in the Society, it is not for himself, nor even for the welfare of his own soul, that he labours, but for the people of the world, in which he is seriously interested. It is here that the great difference from other orders, more especially the contemplative, is seen. The Jesuit is a traveller, journeying from town to town, from country to country, leading always the life of the people amongst whom he is. Of his three great vows—Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience—the greatest is Obedience, so that one is almost compelled to notice the extraordinary likeness to an army that the Society presents, where the word of the General is absolute, from which there is no appeal. "It is necessary," he says, "to be like a corpse or a stick, moved by another."

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Ambition even for extraordinary asceticism or holiness is thus rigidly suppressed. It is the system, not the individual, that is of importance, that in any enterprise or adventure can be successful. It is as though three hundred years ago Ignatius Loyola had discovered the military system of our day as we see it in Europe. The subordination of the individual to society has been in our own day, perhaps, the somewhat impossible dream of a few socialists. St. Ignatius, however, seems to have realized it in the Society, and perhaps it is in that his extraordinary power lay. It is less indeed as a Mystic than as a General that the world judges him, and yet in him is seen I think the very flower of mysticism, that is really not concerned with dreaminess at all, but chiefly with a practical equipment of the soul, and a great enthusiasm. More even than St. John of the Cross, or St. Teresa, he may be said to have come near to the heart of that profound idea, for the essence of mysticism is that Reality of which he alone of all saints held the key, thus opening to the world a new knowledge, a stricter ideal.



ST. TERESA





## St. Teresa

*Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus, non despicias*

**I**N all the history of mystical religion, perhaps there is no name so well known as that of St. Teresa. Born in Avila in 1515, we can trace her life almost from her earliest years until her death in 1582. But with her dates are entirely useless, save in that they tell us vaguely she lived at the end of the middle age. Her mother, who died when the saint was nearly twelve years old, we are told, was "very calm," and in opening the book of Teresa's life it is these words which ring in our ears. Even in her early youth she seems to have had a kind of indifference to life, so that even before her mother's death she had set out for Africa, for the Moors, seeking martyrdom, and coming short, returns, she and her brother, who had accompanied her, determined to become hermits, so that they set

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about "piling small stones one upon another to build hermitages, but they fell down immediately." It is almost all we hear of this brother, who long after died fighting for Spain in South America; it is but the very beginning of what we know of herself. On her mother's death she goes to Our Lady of Charity in Avila and implores her to become her mother, and soon afterwards she goes to the Augustinian Monastery in Avila to be educated. And so the monastery gates shut silently behind her for ever; the noise of the world can never distract her, the sun is outside warming the world, while she prays or sets others to pray for her in the shadowy cells of the Augustinian Monastery or another. In that shadowy light she passes imperceptibly from a child into a woman. She suffers terrible bodily pain, and hours of unconsciousness, and emerges at last into the historical figure we know, the mystic St. Teresa. One of her earliest and deepest sayings was, "I am quite certain that great evils would be avoided if we clearly understood that what we have to do is not to be on our guard against men but on our guard against displeasing Thee." And it is with that marvellous insight into the things of the spirit which grew deeper and deeper as she journeyed on that "way of Perfection"

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that she passed almost without a struggle the age of twenty-nine, which in the cloistered life, we are told, is so terrible to encounter. And although God had bestowed upon her the "gift of tears," she can yet find it in her heart to say, "I was so imprudent and so blind as to think it a virtue to be grateful and loyal to one who liked me." Truly, the laughter of the world is far away from one who can say that, and Spring can bring no joy to her whose eyes were so fixed upon a far other resurrection. And perhaps it is from this time we notice in her rule little eccentricities, afterwards disowned or suppressed, sometimes with a frank avowal that she has been deceived, as when she does not pray for more than a year, thinking it an act of greater humility to abstain, but later says, "Let no one cease from praying who has once begun it, be his life never so wicked." One day with a kind of surprise she makes a great discovery, finding that mental prayer is nothing less than being on terms of friendship with God. So she becomes as it were an ivory tower of prayer, entrenched not to be approached, or surprised by the world, her soul inviolate within the white walls of silence.

Ah ! she who "was a prisoner to things of the world," has become the servant of another

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master, whose service it seems is not less terrible, whose reward too she was sure was not less certain. But in that service there are foes undreamed of by the world, deserts it might seem impossible to cross, nights without stars or dew, dawns freezing with an unimaginable cold, and days burning with as fierce a heat. It is the desert, with its dryness and its dust that she most fears, and at last she comes to see Prayer as a river of water, or an oasis, or a pool, or best of all as the rare rain. After these terrible experiences she is certain that the love of God "does not consist in tears nor in the sweetness and tenderness which we for the most part desire and with which we console ourselves, but rather in serving Him in justice, fortitude and humility." And so with her the great physical austerities seem almost to be passed over in favour of an austerity of spirit, a profound (as calm as profound) contempt for the world and its possessions. To retire into the desert where one could neither sleep nor find anything to eat, or to undertake much fasting or sharp penances, at least for the weaker sort (among whom is she not one ?) she finds useless or wrong ; the world has indeed grown up into a less realistic life. But to Prayer with its terrible experiences and expressions, its

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illimitable deserts, its maddening thirsts, its visions and mirages, it is to this she directs herself and us. And if we look at these things with eyes other than those satiated with worldly beauty, this is but one example of her common sense, her extraordinary sanity. There is to her no distinction of great or small in the soul, the twilight lands of the spirit are with her as wide as the firmament, immeasurable, beyond the world set in the ether behind the stars, or any sight or sound. The supremacy, the sufficiency and the imperishable beauty of spirit, that is all she can see. The wind, silence, and love are nothing to her who signs herself Terésa de Jésus.

The flight of the spirit is strong and soaring, a thing of heaven, not to be held within the ramparts of the world. In her wonderful mind the doctrine of the Trinity becomes reality. Her visions of Hell and of her glorified Lord came to her, not in youth but in middle life, at forty-four years of age. "I felt a fire in my soul," she says. It is all she can say in words of this, her most terrible experience, and "It is the soul itself that is tearing itself in pieces."

Of her vision of Christ, which happened on St. Peter's day, all she can say is, "I saw nothing with the eyes of the body, nothing

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with the eyes of the soul." And so almost the last words of her mysticism, her philosophy, if you will have it so, are a realization of the limitations, the petty limitations of the world, the flesh, the mind, the very soul itself. "Well do I see," she says, "how little I can do ; but close to Thee aloft in this watch-tower where truth is seen, if Thou dost not leave me I can do everything." On those fields of snow that are the silences of this world she found a thousand jewels. Rich beyond envy or desire, mighty princess of saints, from that Interior Castle, where she dwelt, her spirit at length sighed out her last mighty and humble words, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS





## St. John of the Cross

**I**T is somewhat difficult to write of St. John of the Cross without falling into an excess, either of disgust and scepticism, or of terror and wonder. And so it is the more to be regretted that he never wrote an autobiography, as St. Teresa did, and that in all his work there is no single personal or human touch, everything set down there being the coldest knowledge, gathered during many years of a life that, in spite of all his passionate devotion and renunciation, he seems to have lived with a kind of indifference, choosing almost too eagerly at times, and with so wise an air, unpleasant disastrous things. Yet it may be said of him, as of no other saint, that he has described the most terrible experiences of the soul of man, again almost with indifference: "To suffer, to work and to be silent" being, as he says in a letter to the religious of Veas, "the only sure way to preserve the spirit."

Born at Fontibere, near Avila, in Old Castille,

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in 1542, he was the youngest child of Gonzales of Yepes. Even when a child he was pious, less natural, as a world occupied in the pursuit of material wealth and wellbeing has said of him, less simple than other children, occupying himself with the sick and sorry, finding in them the sinister humour of life that is ready in a moment to be cruel, and to make sport of her lovers. After his father's death, his mother with her three children goes to Medina, where St. John is brought up and educated by the Jesuits, an order that made full allowance for all that crafty humour of things, happenings, circumstances; sometimes forgetting the latter part of a text that enjoins the wisdom of the serpent, in the endeavour to outwit even so old a gamester as Life in knowledge and daring, in dealing with the human soul.

With a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, at twenty-one years of age he takes the religious habit of the Carmelite Friars at Medina, and from thence sets out for Salamanca to complete his studies at the university there—a place already famous, claiming as she did St. Dominic as a son. His biographer tells us that his austerities while at Salamanca were incredible. It is easy to believe it. Already his soul has begun to wear out the body, tiring and shaming so frail a thing by its immortal

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splendour and perfection. His intelligence, seeing as it did beyond death into the countries of the spirit, was yet aware of the condemnation of the bodily part of man, yes and chiefly of himself, to death; and it is almost with a kind of cynical humour that he takes away from the body little by little, even the joy that might be crowded into so short a time of reprieve, hustling it a little unkindly perhaps towards that death for which he professes to have but little regard or respect. At last, in 1567, he was ordained to the priesthood. And it is from this time, one of the supreme moments of his life we may suppose, that he departed on that journey into the inspired and accurate science of mysticism, pursuing his way so far that he distances somewhat easily indeed all who went before him. Above all things he desires greater silence and a more profound power of meditation—a stillness of spirit not easily come by at all—to attain to which he desires greatly to enter the Order of the Carthusians.

It was then indeed that he heard a voice as of old calling him to follow, nor in anything was he less ready than those few who had perhaps no more really than he himself seen and walked with Jesus. And it was in his ready obedience to that interior voice that he found

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as it were the justification for his great neglect of the world, the denial of life, a pre-occupation with what was unreal to all but himself. There have been many forms of egotism that have been of supreme benefit to the world, and in that form of self possession that is to be found in mysticism it may well be there is some melody that almost unconsciously holds up our hearts and will in the end make harmony out of the lives of men. It may well be; and yet in so distracted a world he who is intent on his own perfection to the exclusion of the joyful sound of a world that God so loved, who will not turn from his own supreme business even for our tears, or ever care for the sunlight or the sound of rain, has forgotten the way of Him who bore the press of the multitude and so seldom withdrew into Himself for that peace He too desired. Such a man has indeed forgotten the world; no sun shines upon him, nor is the night the fairer because of the stars; he is absorbed in God and has as it were surrendered his life before the time. The men and women who surround him are to him but dust blown by a strong wind, nor is there anything fair, nor is there anything lovely in heaven and earth and in the deep sea, for all things are as nothing in comparison with God.

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About this time St. Teresa, busied with her reformation of the Carmelites, coming to Medina, heard of Brother John, and from the first greatly desired to see him. So she, whose heart was fire, persuaded him that God had called him to the service of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Had she, who had almost lifted up a world to Christ, stirred that profound mind from its lethargy of thought, firing with her own wonderful joy so cold an intelligence? It hardly seems so.

In a poor house in the village of Durvelle, on Advent Sunday, it is said, in 1568, Brother John entered the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel; still, it would seem, engrossed in thought from which he never really emerges, busied with that science of the soul that holds as its first axiom the worthlessness of life, the ugliness of the world. Contemplating, as was his wont, the sufferings of Christ, he raises within his heart a crucifix of tears, and awed by the majesty of his dream stands in silence there all the days of his life. And there he encounters the sudden darkness, physical, spiritual, that fell on him too there on Calvary as in the old days it fell on a wondering terrified world. It was then, breaking through the triple silence of his thought, that the catastrophe he has described so marvellously in

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“The Night Obscure” came upon him and crushed him, and left him at last less than ever in touch with a world that already he had insulted and despised. And ever after the world to him was but a tale, a dream.

A spiritual distraction, madness in the soul, consuming it with a dry fury and uneasiness, robs him even of prayer. Doubts, perhaps almost for the first time, assail him with a persistency that is, he thinks, devilish. Scruples, born may be of weariness and sunshine, the last protest of that body over which he had tyrannized so fiercely, torture and engulf him. The desolation, the loneliness, the weariness of that desert he describes with such profound emotion and precision, served, he thinks, to strip his soul naked at last, so that even he himself shall love himself no more and be as nothing, and that which God made in His own image become, if God so much as turn away, the emptiness of a mirror reflecting the wide unclouded sky. And he comes at last to see, not with any facile acquiescence born of indifference and fear, the advantages of suffering, finding a recreation for the soul, at least, in pain, such as in our own day might be looked for in joy. And yet he has declared to a world that has for the most part become indifferent or incredulous, that he was made one with

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Christ, and met Him face to face and spoke with Him beside that wide and mysterious sea of the spirit upon which so few have dared to set sail. It was St. Teresa who said of him, "Christ seems to hold him by the hand." There was, one may suppose, at least in that fact sufficient joy to swallow up the night obscure and make him more simple of mind, more serenely happy, than he ever really became. Surely, had one but seen Jesus, life would be a very simple matter ever after.

But it is the night obscure with which he occupies himself, not the everlasting day. And in his knowledge, acquired so hardly, there appears something almost sinister, almost thankless. He never forgets; notes even that he "never received any extraordinary favour which was not preceded by some great tribulation."

In 1576 St. John is appointed spiritual director of St. Teresa's convent at Avila. Coming there with those profound experiences already upon him, having in his innumerable visions as really forgotten the world as a child will do while watching the figures on a stage or listening to an entrancing book, he persuades the religious as well as many seculars to put themselves under a much stricter rule. But the older friars, not altogether perhaps without

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reason, look on these new ways as a rebellion against their order. After all they were friars and not monks. To them the world was not a dead letter, a forgotten or but dimly remembered experience, but the prize for which they laboured, to gain which they too, as well as He they followed, were willing to die. Not the exercises of the soul in its endeavours after perfection, but the very tears and laughter of life, the simpler sorrows of death and birth, the simpler joys of love and work in which the world is engaged, were their chief business. They who were vowed to service dared not wander far from the very daily life of a world given as it were into their charge. It was indeed no new thing, this quarrel, but as old as Christianity itself. A question involving almost a first principle, which men were bound to see differently; a question as to whether the individual perfection was the right aim of man, already sufficiently lonely, or just the service of humanity, not only spiritual but bodily too—feeding the poor and caring for the sick, loving the world.

The friars of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel condemned Brother John in their chapter at Placentia as a fugitive and apostate. So they sent soldiers, who carried him to the prison of his convent, and not



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daring to keep him imprisoned in Avila, they removed him to Toledo, where he remained nine months, after which time he was released by the efforts of St. Teresa. And as though in forgiveness of one who after all was only as it were less human than themselves, he was made Prior of Granada in 1581, and Vicar Provincial of Andalusia in 1585, and even first definitor of the Order in 1588. It was about this time that he founded a convent in Segovia, sending to that peerless city some who loved him. And he has told us how that he asked three things of God: First, that he might not pass one day of his life without suffering something; second, that he might not die as superior; third, that he might end his life in humiliation, disgrace and contempt. And so it came to pass.

In 1591, for opposing the Chapter of his Order in some trifling matter, those who had always been jealous of him thrust him out of the Order. He retired at once, gladly it would seem, to the little convent of Pegnuela, in the mountains of Sierra Morena. But his enemies were not satisfied with his banishment, and he who had never loved his life found it too small a thing to defend when it was sought of him by those that hated him. And indeed, like his Master Christ who had so often walked

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with him, all his friends forsook him and fled ; and at last, physically as always spiritually, he is really alone with God. His body too, his enemy, he seems always to have thought, from the beginning turned against him and he fell sick. His enemies, now without pity, finding him sick, have him removed to a less sweet place, to Abeda, which he loved by reason of its poverty and discomfort ; even then that curious inverted selfishness, that greediness of suffering, being as characteristic of him as ever. Treated, it is said, with the utmost inhumanity, he died on December 14, 1591, in his fiftieth year, with the words "Glory be to God " half uttered on his lips.

"He therefore who loveth anything beside God renders his soul incapable of the Divine union and transformation in God, for the vile-ness of the creature is much less capable of the dignity of the Creator than darkness is of light. All things in heaven and earth are nothing in comparison with God." That seems to me to be the keynote of his life. He despised the world and loved it not, and in revenge the world in turn has forgotten him ; and if at times his image crosses the mind, it is almost as a caricature of madness, hideous, obscene, hugging to itself the unforgivable sin—the denial of life.

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And of all saints these mystical scientists, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, are the least emotional, the least hysterical. They seem above all others to have felt little and thought much. Their aim is practical, the founding of what is really a new Order, and they succeed. For us in a world occupied intellectually only with aesthetic philosophy they do not make the same irresistible appeal as St. Francis does, or St. Catherine of Siena, or St. Dominic. We have forgotten St. John of the Cross in speculating how we may make the most of that which he threw away from him, and the wisest of us being desirous of life and beauty, we seem to be able only to laugh at him who denied the slightest value to the one as to the other, and bartered those things which he saw and felt for dreams, and was content to appear absurd, setting as he did such store by the glory of God.



ST. ROSE OF LIMA  
ISABEL DE FLORES



# St. Rose of Lima

## THE ROSE OF MARY

**I**SABEL DE FLORES is certainly not the least lovely of those who have come through great tribulation to that serene and perfect beauty that one can sometimes realize so clearly is hidden in holiness. Born at Lima, in Peru, 1586, she was christened Isabel, but her beauty being like to a budding rose for perfection, she is given by the love of her friends the name of Rose—a name that has indeed become hers for ever in her title “the Rose of Mary.” And she is a very rose, full of the perfume of life starred with the dew of the morning, flushed with the sunset of a new world. The world comes near to her as to one of its own children, falling back at last before her curious smile, called to her lips perhaps by some jest of the angels.

It is in a garden we seem always to find her

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—a garden planted with bitter herbs, and set with tiny crucifixes, where silence is found, and the sweet incense of the earth, where night comes slowly from the sea laden with brine and the pictures of heaven. Always in a sort of mysterious refinement she moves, a young maid full of knowledge not only of heavenly things but of the crooked learning of devils, who whisper to her from the trees, of the sweetest sins of the world, and the crimson beauty of life. So one thinks of her more lovingly it may be than of other saints less beautiful than she, less intimately, in the end she is so isolated and alone in her garden of bitter herbs; not to be understood even by her mother who loves her, for that mother one day sets a garland of flowers on her head that men might commend that beauty which God had made even for Himself and His own pleasure. And she, always with that enigmatical smile about her lips and brows, thrusts a pin so deeply through the flowers that at night when her mother would have removed the garland, she finds it pinned to that forehead behind which lay those thoughts she strove in vain to understand. But her beauty is commended by the young men though unadorned with garlands, so she who is vowed to that Secret and Perfect Lover



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Whose Name it is not lawful for her to boast, disfigures her face with a powder of Indian pepper and her breasts and neck with bark that she may veil her loveliness from those who must forget. Still there is one who seeing the beauty of her hands, praises their sweetness to her, but she "immediately ran and thrust both her hands into hot lime, saying, 'Never let my hands be to any one an occasion of temptation.'" It is as though for herself she has no fears; she who has listened to the talk of angels, and even heard over the hills of heaven that Voice as of many waters can never bear anything but silence again; her ears are filled with the sound of those waters so that they are impregnable to any other sounds. Yet she too must lay her fair body on a cross, and pierce the hands that one, speaking the thought of many, had called beautiful, and crown her head that had refused the flowers with a more terrible garland.

About this time her parents fall on evil days, and she is taken into the house of one Gonzalvo; and here too we find her in a garden working with her needle at what delicate curious task we know not. And being importuned to marry not only by her parents but by one who loved her, in order to rid

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herself of these desirous lovers she takes upon herself a vow of virginity and enters the third Order of St. Dominic.

But on the morning that should have seen her wedded she “perfumed herself and painted her lips and put on her wedding frock and decked her hair with Roses,” and went a little way out of the city where on the top of a little hill she met not indeed her bridegroom but St. Mary, ever Virgin, Queen of Angels, and all those clouds of Saints, who lures her away, into Her heaven.

And it is again in a garden we find her in a little and lonely cell where she tears her sweet body with iron, and mingles the bitter herbs with her food, and hugs to herself the desire of death, which is all that stands between her and the Bridegroom. Ah, and upon her head she wore a silver crown, resplendent and glorious, and set on the inside with little sharp pricks from which the blood came staining her white forehead.

And in a kind of shame she comes one day to consider of all her fleeting beauty and of all her wasted youth, till in disgust either at herself and at her reticent life, or, as is more generally supposed, at her own unworthiness for so merciful and kind a God, she considers herself as the “basest of sinful monsters and

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the sink of the universe, unworthy to breathe the air."

But at length Christ comes to her, into her garden, and calls her in a soft and sweet voice, so that she is not too much afraid, and speaks to her as to His Beloved, and caresses her with words of love.

And during an illness the Infant Christ comes to her, and seeming unconscious of her pain, challenges her to a game of skill; the which she wins, amidst Childish peals of laughter, asking as a prize the removal of her pain, which immediately vanishes.

But in a second game on which the Christ insists she loses, and her pain on the instant returns, the Child passing from her sight. To her mysterious mind, some divine meaning shines in this exquisite comedy. So that she prays ever after "Lord increase my sufferings and with them increase Thy love in my heart."

It was on August 24, in 1617, in her thirty-second year, that Rose de Flores died, commending her mother to the care of her divine Lover and bidding those who stood around her to take away the pillows and the mattress of the bed, so that she too, like Him Who had said to her, "Rose of My heart, be My spouse," might die at last upon the tree.

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Thus wrapt in the beauty of Him for whom her loveliness had faded, calling Him ever by His most precious Name, she departed with Him who had at last come for His own.

“ My beloved is gone down into her garden to the bed of spices, to feed in the garden and to gather lilies.”

## CONCLUSION



## Conclusion

**W**ELL have I considered how quickly all things pass away and are consumed by death. Nor am I greedy of life, for I hope I shall be content to relinquish even that too when I must. But if I set to and long for that which most men suffer unwillingly, I have accepted a gift ungraciously and have soon grown tired of the entertainment of my God. Certainly as a child I came into the world knowing but one thing, namely, that some day I must quit it, nor in all my pleasure and business have I ever been able to forget it. But in times when I have thought of the lives of the saints, I confess, not without shame, that they have appeared to me ungrateful, and terrible. For either as I believe this world is a comely place, or, as they continually insist, only evil and not to be desired.

Reader, pardon me if in my dreams I have come farther short of perfection than I had meant to do.

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For me Death would be a great misfortune, while to them it appears as a great reward. I cannot fly with them, nor look into the face of the sun. In truth I am fallen in love with Life; to desert her for a new mistress, even though she should be Death, would seem to me like treason. I am continually reminded that God made the world even as He made heaven. I am content He made it so well. So I would not have you indignant that being no saint, but a man only, I write as a man and not as a saint.

I know my feebleness; my language is that of the world, and not that of the angels; alas, my thoughts are ever stained with the world's penury. So do not look too high on these my figures; I have but drawn them from the waist down, the shoulders and the head were beyond my sight.

And if my thoughts run ever upon them who for some great thing have given up the world, it is perhaps because I too must one day sacrifice all that appears so precious now, and for no great cause but from necessity. Shall I be tired, as they were? shall I too be content? Ah! I can never willingly forego the sun, or take my last look on the sea, and say farewell to the beautiful cities, and for ever forsake the mountains and the hills.



## LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Though a bright angel came from heaven with news of some delectable world lovelier past all compare than ours, though I could be assured of this, and made certain, I would, if I could, forego it, and hold a little closer to my own, and look a little longer on the sunset and think of the cool night.

Yet it is said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Ah! I am wrong. The saints are right. It is necessary to give up the world, to throw life from us, and to occupy ourselves with that God Who is really approached only through Death. Yes, they were right.

Yet I cannot decide to-day. I am too happy. It is necessary to become a little quiet ere one can nerve oneself for the great renouncement. Can a man ever really decide? Not in one day, nor in many days nor in a whole life. Meantime my garden waits.









